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# FACTS . . . . .

BY RAYMOND G. SCHMITT, '41

## GOING PLACES?

You should be. Now with the ever decreasing accidents between the demons of the highway we may feel a lot safer in stealing out to the country for that little breath on those hot, sultry, summer weekends. The fact is, forty-five states reduced highway deaths in terms of mileage driven in 1938. Our own state of Ohio; having a decrease of 25% to her credit, is listed with those having the most marked decrease of fatalities over 1937.

Thousands of lives and millions of dollars have been saved in recent years from the drive for highway safety in which a dozen national organizations and innumerable state and local groups of officials and civilians have united. For instance, who hasn't heard the announcer at the end of a football game say, "Ladies and gentlemen, the State Highway Patrol requests that you drive carefully and arrive home safely. Pleasant trip."

Have you ever been in a car going ninety? Well, I hope you won't have any reason to be. Let me tell you, even if you aren't scared stiff, it's a pretty tough spot to be in, watching that narrow road up ahead, every muscle tense, and expecting something to happen any moment. A thrill, yes, but therein lies the whole trouble. Speed, speed, and more speed. We are always in a hurry. Consider the old proverb "Haste makes waste." The whole ghastly business of a smash-up couldn't be better explained.

There seem to be three types of people involved. Youngsters of high school age, those always in a hurry, and last but not least the pleasure and thrill seeking enthusiasts, those half under the table or mayhap I should say cocked contagents of the road. Things just don't always happen. They are brought on most of the time.

This useless waste of lives and property has to be nipped in the bud". That is what our national safety organization has in mind when we find an estimated 5000 high schools in thirty-three states teaching safety education to nearly half of the high school students in the United States. What is their aim? Let me tell you it is a foregone conclusion that "if" something can be done to eliminate the attitude of "hit it and see what it's made out of," ours will be a much more wonderful country to live in. A lot of moral may be taken from one little roadside rhyme that certainly packs a wallop:

Not many a driver is now alive

Who passed on hills at seventy-five.

Stop and think a little the next time you want to push 'er down to the floor. On the other hand, don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating cars with less speed. True, in our era of invention things go faster without a greater risk to lives and property. It's a fine thing, but can't it be used to advantage rather than destruction? Just because it is there is no reason why you should spoil it with recklessness. Use it sparingly and drive carefully. No one is expected to go thirty-five

on an open country road with a modern car. That's not the idea. Use it, but use it with discretion.

Recently, one of our University's distinguished economists, Mr. Hayes, was giving a short talk. During the course of the discussion, he spoke of the last war as having a favorable effect upon the economic standpoint of our country. One bright scholar offered this solution: He asked, "Then you suggest we go to war, Mr. Hayes, to relieve the present economic situation? Laughingly, Mr. Hayes replied, "No. Just because I say war is good for the economic viewpoint is no sign that I want it." Proceeding, he remarked, "Take for instance, the hurricane in New England the past year. The destruction caused there gave thousands employment and gave excess to funds otherwise lying idle, but just because this hurricane helped economically is no sign that we wanted it." Now apply this logic to the problem of speed. Certainly speed helps. Designers strengthen the body and chassis to allow for the vibrations at high speeds, but can't we take advantage of this smoother ride at sixty rather than seventy-five?

It certainly looks like I'm developing a complex like some history professors. Enough of this lecturing. On with the statistics. In 1938 fatalities were reduced for all ages, the lowest being 10% and the highest 24%. Pedestrian fatalities predominate in cities where 61% of those killed are people on foot. In the country, naturally, we find collision in predominance the toll being 34% of the rural fatalities. Nevertheless, travel is becoming safer every day, and we take our hats off to those who are lending their part in making it such.

Who would have thought of it, but the average annual mileage traveled by passenger cars decreases with the age of the car. During the first year the mileage is 13,000; the fifth, 8,700; the tenth, 4,700; and the fifteenth, 2,400 miles. On the whole, the average vehicle travels 8,870 miles yearly. Wouldn't you like to see an old "jalopi" ambling along at that annual rate. Reminds you of "Gasoline Alley" where they're always taking the old bus apart to see what makes it tick. With it apart most of the time I daresay it would get far on the scheduled mileage.



The boss, "our dear editor," wants a 2000 word article in almost a week. So he hands me a little magazine on the Automobile Industry and says, "Go to it boy." Kind of quick and skeptical like he adds, "Think you can do it? "Yup." Maybe I'm trying to bite off too big a chunk, anyways I'm up a tree. Don't get me wrong, "Ferdinand" isn't behind me. Wonder who the editor thinks I am, "Walt" Winchell? That's it, Winchell. Come to think of it the boss did want his style. But what's a guy going to do with a bunch of old dry statistics coming under heading like: 1938 Motor Taxes Exceed 1½ Billions. It sounds like an abbreviated war debt doesn't it. Motorists Pay One Out of Every Eight Tax Dollars. And who pays the other seven? The motorists, of course. For doesn't the man who owns a car usually own property too? Two others for the looks surely give you something to think about as follows: One Out of Every Eight Automobile Tax Dollars is Used for Non-Highway Purposes, and The Motorists' Gas Tax Bill Grows Bigger. Even though, the price of gasoline is low.

The trend toward 4-door sedans is up sharply. It must be the influence of "keeping up with the Joneses". When the fellow next door buys one of those big 4-door jobs you have to have one too if you want to keep the family prestige and social standing at par in the register. Anyway, the 4-door models are gaining in percentage, at present, being 45.39% of the total cars put out. The 2-door, with a decreasing percentage, holds down 35.72%, and our old stand-by, the third musketeer of the big three, namely the coupe, brings up the rear with 14.81%.

Looking at the 1938 export summarize we find interesting statements. The foreign sales of motor vehicles of American design show a total of 492,028 of these, 166,086 are Canadian output. Nineteen percent of the American production is export and ranks first among our country's export of manufactured products. The value of United States and Canadian exports (including tire parts and accessories) is \$314,575,091. Our leading export market (excepting Canada) for passenger cars, is the Union of South Africa; for motor trucks, Argentina.

This large export is due to reciprocal trade agreements reducing trade barriers. These reductions in barriers to automobile export trade have been obtained in a substantial number of trade agreements negotiated by the United States Government since 1934. As of June, 1939 there are twenty agreements in effect:

#### 1. Tariff Reductions

Reductions in foreign tariffs against automobiles are made in agreements with the following countries: Cuba, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Columbia, France, Czechoslovakia (inoperative), Ecuador, Turkey, and various British Colonies.

#### 2. Greater Quotas.

The following countries enlarge the quota on automobiles under the terms of trade agreements: Switzerland, France, and Czechoslovakia (inoperative).

#### 3. "Bound" Duties.

Tariff duties on automobiles were bound under trade agreements with the following countries (a "bound"

duty is frozen at existing levels, which in the following countries are low, and which is not to be increased for the life of the agreement): Haiti, Sweden, Netherlands, Switzerland, Honduras (on free list), Guatemala (sur-taxes eliminated also), France (certain parts), and the United Kingdom.

Have you ever considered the motor industry's use of some farm products? They're pretty important, thank you. Considered among our country's own products are: cotton, in bales and lintens; wool; mohair; cattle, (hides); hogs, (fats, hair); sugar canes; soy beans; corn; flaxseed; turpentine; wood pulp; wheat straw and other cellulose materials; and, believe it or else, an estimated consumption of 18,590 lbs. of bees-wax in 1938 valued at \$3,300.00. Imported products include: rubber, jute, sisal, castor beans, cork, chamois, silk, and tungnut oil.

Wanted: Progress in uniform state motor vehicle laws and municipal ordinances. Now that's a pretty big order, but nevertheless, rapidly being filled to the ultimate of accomplishment. Safety, economy, and convenience in the use of motor vehicles require uniform as well as adequate regulation of traffic. Organized effort towards its accomplishment began with the formulation of a "Uniform Motor Vehicle Code", originally prepared in 1925-6 by the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety in cooperation with the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. This was reviewed and revised by the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety in 1930, 1934, and again in 1938.

The following organizations cooperated with the U. S. Department of Commerce in conducting the Conference: Bureau of Public Roads; Department of Agriculture; American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators; American Automobile Association; American Mutual Alliance; American Railway Association; American Transit Association; Chamber of Commerce of the U. S.; Automobile Manufacturers Association; National Bureau of Casualty and Surety Underwriters; and National Safety Council.

In its present form the Uniform Code comprises five acts:

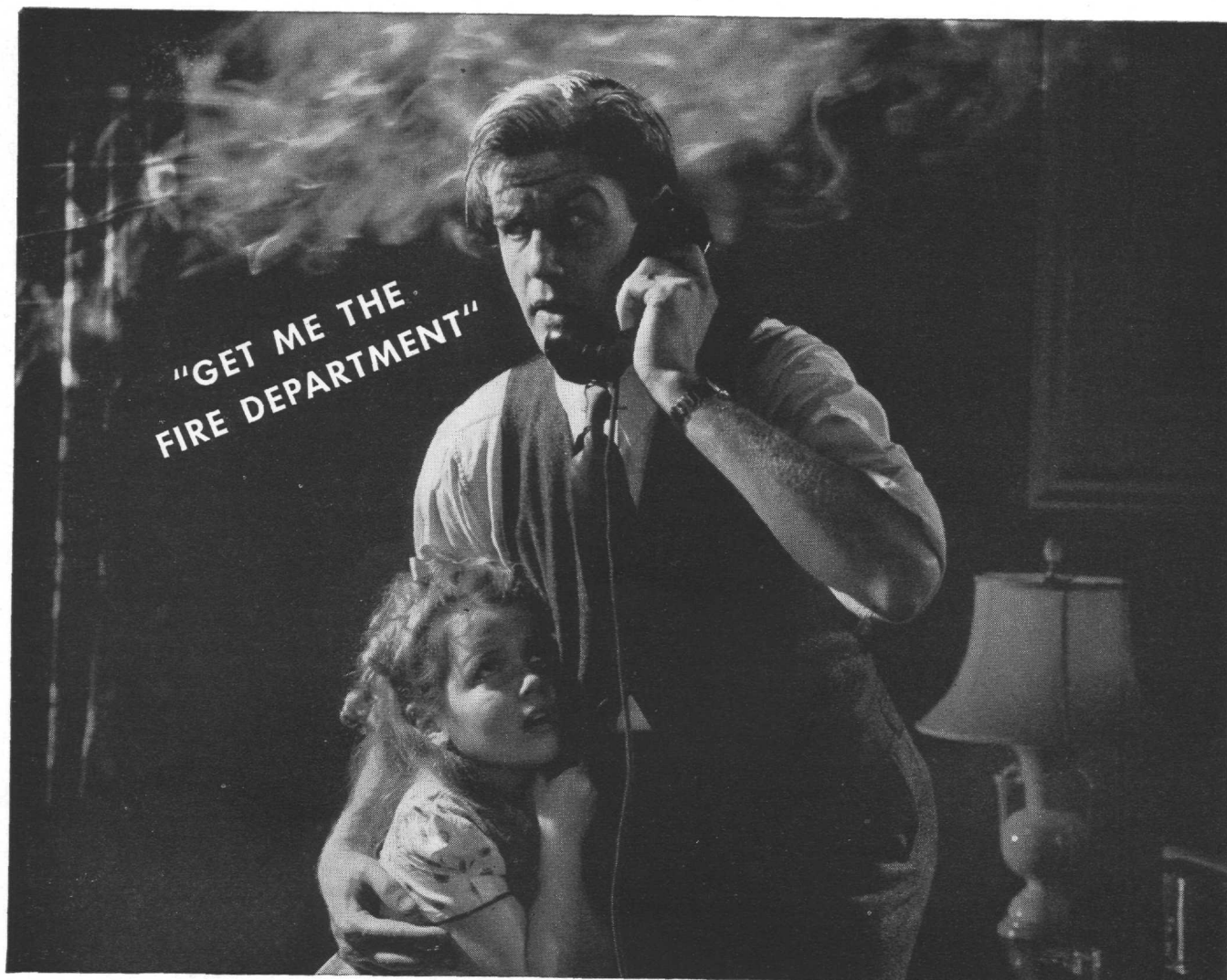
- I. Administration, Registration, Certificate of Title and Anti-theft Act.
- II. Operators' and Chauffeurs' License Act.
- III. Civil Liability Act.
- IV. Safety-Responsibility Act.
- V. Act Regulating Traffic on the Highways.

To supplement the foregoing recommended State Legislation, the first model municipal traffic ordinance was prepared in 1927-8 by the National Conference on Street and Highway Safety. It was also reviewed and revised by the conference in 1930, 1934, and again in 1938.

In its latest form it consists of three parts:

- I. Model Municipal Traffic Ordinance.
- II. Model Traffic Administrative Ordinance.
- III. State Law Provisions which might be included in the Traffic Ordinance.

The Model Traffic Ordinances, as prepared in 1934, have been adopted by a large number of cities and



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towns, both large and small, in all sections of the country. The Model Traffic Ordinance is sufficiently comprehensive to meet the needs of the largest cities, yet small cities may omit those provisions which are not appropriately applicable without destroying any of the essential elements of uniformity. Cities in states which have not adopted the Uniform Code Act V, must consider the legality of the Model Ordinance provisions in the particular state.

One of the leading Associations of the automobile industry is the Automobile Manufacturers Association Inc. The "Association," which is the organization through which the motor vehicle manufacturers of the United States cooperate on matters of common interest, was organized in 1913 under the name of the National Automobile Chamber of Commerce (name changed to present one in 1934). The Association is the successor of the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers, the Automobile Board of Trade and the Association of Licensed Automobile Manufacturers.

Object: To represent the manufacturers of motor vehicles in all matters where cooperative activity is proper, efficient and economical and to serve as the clearing house for research and information on all subjects relating to highway transportation.

The scope of the Association's work is indicated by the following list of some of its current activities:

Administers the Cross-Licensing Agreements program under which members have pooled 1100 patents for use by other members without payment of royalty. This activity was designated in the 1920 American Trade Association Executives award competition as the most outstanding service performed by any trade association.

Through a comprehensive Employment Stabilization program, is seeking to reduce seasonal fluctuations in the industry's operations, thus making possible more regular and continuous employment with greater annual earnings for workers.

Conducts researches on all subjects relating to the manufacture sale, sale and operation of motor vehicles including: markets; factory employment; legislation; safety; highway construction and finance; foreign trade; commercial highway transportation; taxation; rail, highway and ocean freight traffic; and patents.

Manages the National Automobile Show in New York.

Publishes "Automobile Facts and Figures," "Motor Truck Facts," "Automobile Facts," and the literature dealing with various phases of highway transportation.

Is conducting a comprehensive nation-wide program for the promotion of greater traffic safety.

Maintains the most complete automotive library in existence for use of members.

Studies rail and steam transportation rates and service and seeks to develop maximum efficiency and economy in the movement of automotive freight.

Aids in promoting sound and equitable legislative principles relating to highway transportation.

Encourages the development of highway facilities throughout the world on a sound economic basis.

Upon invitation, sends representatives to foreign countries to aid in the development of highway transportation.

Maintains regional information offices in Detroit and Washington.

From a comment by the Wall Street Journal, Sept. 6, 1939 on the Federal Trade Commission's report on the Motor Vehicles Industry I quote:

"The broad commendation of the competitive practices of the automobile industry by the Federal Trade Commission as described in this newspaper by Gaston E. Marque in his series on the subject is notable because of its source. The F. T. C. usually does not go out of its way to praise a whole industry for its practices; nor is the practice of mentioning for especial commendation the larger units in the industry exactly a habit with any governmental regulatory body.

"For these reasons it is noteworthy that the commendation by the Commission in effect summarized the results of studies of individual companies which have previously appeared in the newspaper. Consistently the Commission's researches show that the larger companies have joined with the smaller units in effecting reductions in prices virtually at all times. There has been nothing 'monopolistic' in sheer bigness here, it appears.

"Another thing which stands out as a result of the analysis of the Commission's report in this series is the fact that all companies have reduced prices whenever possible, and often without regard to the fact that by normal commercial standards there was no immediate reason for such action. They have taken the long view—year in, year out—and this policy has seldom been abandoned for long, if at all, by any unit in the field.

"Another thing which highlights the report is the fact that the 'cooperative spirit,' which the Commission notes as having existed in the industry, has apparently facilitated rather than the reverse, the general lowering of prices for value received. This in itself is a lesson worth the observation of some other governmental bodies, which evidently are unable to believe that cooperation can ever mean anything other than price-fixing to the disadvantage of the customer.

"It is worthy of considerable thought that an industry which has been subjected to a study so obviously thorough as is the F. T. C. analysis should produce so glowing a record."

## **TOM STARKER JR.**

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